

**Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting
Held on August 24, 2017**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, August 24, 2017 at Campbell High School, One Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052.

PRESENT: C Couture (Chair), K Douglas, R Keating, J Bourque, D Miller, J Spotts, C Harrison (School Board Representative), J Brunelle (Selectmen Representative)

Absent:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

● **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

3. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Mrs. Couture indicated that she received a resignation letter. She noted that the Budget Committee will need to appoint a new member. She added the Committee will need to nominate a new Vice Chair.

4. REVIEW/ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

● **May 25, 2017**

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to approve the minutes of May 25, 2017

SECOND: by Mrs. Bourque

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

● **June 22, 2017**

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to approve the minutes of June 22, 2017

SECOND: by Mrs. Bourque

VOTE: 5-0-3

The motion carried.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Couture announced she received a letter of resignation from Andrew Cutter. She asked for acceptance of the resignation.

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to accept the resignation of Andrew Cutter from the Budget Committee

SECOND: by Mr. Miller

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

Mrs. Couture asked for nominations for Vice Chair.

MOTION: by Mr. Spotts

Move to nominate Keri Douglas as Vice Chair

SECOND: by Mr. Keating

VOTE: 7-0-1

The motion carried.

6. REPORTS

- **School Business**

Mrs. Couture mentioned that some information was received from the district.

1. General Updates

Mrs. Harrison reported that school begins August 28. She mentioned she attended the opening day staff events and recognitions, which were remarkable. She commented that it was wonderful to see three teachers recognized for 30 years of service.

- **Enrollment**

Mrs. Harrison reviewed the enrollment numbers with the Budget Committee. She indicated that enrollment has increased at both GMS and LMS.

Mrs. Couture mentioned enrollment seems fairly stable.

2. End of Year Expenditures/Unexpended Funds

Mrs. Couture indicated she received some information from the district regarding the end of year fund balance. She noted the unassigned fund balance is \$484,286 and it appears that \$250,000 has been spent ahead on curriculum and technology. She commented that is significant. Mrs. Couture explained there were significant reductions by Budget Committee and concern over those reductions, but ending year with close to \$500,000 is not bad.

Mr. Miller for the total budget increase this year. Mrs. Couture indicated it was \$741,000*.

Mr. Miller commented with the unassigned fund balance, the \$250,000 that was spent ahead and the budget increase, it equates to a \$1.5M increase in FY18.

Mrs. Couture indicated this is why we review the budgets and propose budgets.

**Mrs. Couture sent a correction to the Budget Committee regarding misquoting the school district budget increase for FY18. She clarified that the correct number for the increase of the FY18 budget over the FY17 budget is actually \$288,383.*

Mrs. Harrison reported that official salary information is being entered into the budget and we will have those numbers soon.

Mr. Miller asked about the staffing for the start of the school year. Mrs. Harrison indicated there were 33 openings over the summer, most due to retirements and resignations. She noted many of those positions were reorganized and the district has a full staff of teachers. She added the SAU has hired a new Business Administrator, Curriculum Director and Food Service Director.

Mr. Miller asked if the district would be contracting out for grounds work this year. Mrs. Harrison indicated that a full time groundskeeper and a part time employee were hired and the district does not anticipate the need for contracted services.

Mrs. Couture asked if the building wide assessment recommendations would be brought to the Budget Committee. Mrs. Harrison indicated the district is still waiting for the final report, which will be reviewed by the Capital Planning Committee. A feasibility study was done for the 1930s building to see if it can be used for office or classroom renovation, but it is not recommended. She commented the ultimate goal was to eliminate the portables, but full day Kindergarten has been mandated.

Mrs. Couture noted that an assessment of the 1930s building was completed several years ago with the same conclusion.

- **Town Business**

1. **General Updates**
2. **Budget Update – Calendar**
3. **Fire Station**

Mr. Brunelle reported there are concerns over legal fees and Pennichuck. He indicated the road paving budget is at 19%; the two new police cruisers are fully in service; two police officers were hired and are on their way to the academy; there are five candidates for the open sergeant position who are going through the testing; the police department is monitoring overtime during the new hire training.

Mr. Brunelle reported a part time clerk was hired earlier in the year and the other was hired recently and will be trained.

Mr. Brunelle reported the leach field work is underway at the fire station. He indicated the Board of Selectmen is looking at proposals for the new fire station, and working with architects and planners for a design concept. He anticipates having a bond request for January 2018.

Mrs. Couture mentioned that she, the School Board Chair, the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen Chair met with the Superintendent to discuss open communication between departments. She indicated it was a good meeting.

Mr. Brunelle reported the Block Grant (\$177,000) will be taken in and put toward projects this year. He indicated the fire hydrant budget is becoming challenging. He noted there was increase of 22% from Pennichuck and we are looking at an appropriation of \$438,396. He reported the town is working on budgets and the Town Administrator will start the process next week. He noted the schedule is aligning well.

Mr. Miller asked about the growth ordinance restriction that was in effect many years ago. Mr. Brunelle does not believe it exists anymore.

Mr. Miller recalled it was an average of the last three years of homes built. Mrs. Couture mentioned that build out for the town is approximately 16,000, assuming every available lot is built on.

Mr. Brunelle indicated the current projects have been approved by the Planning Board. He commented he will find out if the ordinance has expired.

- **RSA 32:22; Review of Expenditures**

8. MEMBER INPUT/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mrs. Couture discussed with the Budget Committee advertising for a new member to fill the recent vacancy. She suggested posting the vacancy on Facebook as the Litchfield page is very active.

Mrs. Bourque believes advertising on the Facebook page and in the HLN is appropriate. She commented that the Committee needs to solicit people to join.

Mr. Miller suggested asking the Superintendent to include notices in packets that go home with students at the beginning of the year. Mrs. Bourque noted the district is moving more toward digital content now.

Mrs. Douglas believes that many parents are active on social media and with advertising on social media and in the newspaper it will provide more coverage.

Mrs. Couture indicated the bylaws state the Committee will advertise in local media.

Mr. Keating suggested advertising on the local cable channel. Mrs. Couture suggested posting the vacancy on the town and district websites. Mr. Miller suggested posting the vacancy on the town signboard.

Mrs. Couture indicated she will submit an article to the HLN, post on social media and request to post on the town and district websites. She encourage Committee members to ask people they know if they are interested in serving. She commented it would be ideal to have interest expressed before the September 28 meeting.

9. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

10. ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mr. Miller

Move to adjourn

SECOND: by Mrs. Douglas

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary

Approved: September 28, 2017